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TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 31

BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Thirty-one

VERIFICATION

The central figure of Key 14 is the angel Michael, angel of the sun and archangel of the element of fire. He is also the angel of the direction South. All these attributions connect him with the sun pictured in Key 19. His name means "Like unto God".

On his brow is a solar symbol, and from his head light radiates. One foot rests on water, symbol of the cosmic mind-stuff. The other foot is on land, symbol of concrete manifestation.

The angel is a symbol of that, in every human being, to which the term **Higher Self** is applied. He is not the **One Identity**, but the Life-Breath of that One Identity, centered in the heart of personality. The greater number of human beings, when they use the pronoun "I", think only of the personal self and regard it as being a separate, independent entity. Others suppose themselves to be overshadowed by some divine or angelic presence, which they look upon as being, on the one hand, separate from the One Identity, and on the other, separate from the personal ego.

The esoteric doctrine is that one's feeling of "egoity" is due to the focusing of a ray of the fiery Life-Breath of the One Identity within the personal organism. This fiery Life-Breath is in continual circulation between the personal center of manifestation and the One Identity whence it originates, just as the electricity lighting a lamp is in continual circulation between the lamp and the dynamo at the power station.

On Michael's white robe is the Tetragrammaton, יהוה, Jehovah. This identifies the angel as being of the order called **Melakin**, Kings, by Qabalists. It places him also in relation to the Sephirah named Tiphareth, Beauty. On the Tree of Life, Tiphareth is the sixth aspect of the Life-power. To it the name יהוה is particularly referred.

Among names of Tiphareth are בן, Ben, Son; מלך Melek, King; and אדם, **Adam**, Man. In Qabalistic psychology, Tiphareth is the seat of the personal ego. It is the point of manifestation for our essential humanity (Adam), which is actually the Divine Son (Ben) of the **One Identity**—even as Jesus taught out of his own first-hand experience.

The seven-pointed star on the angel's breast is a figure which must be drawn by actual experiment with a pair of compasses, for the regular heptagon whence it is derived is not an equal divider of the 360 degrees of a circle. Because making a heptagon requires no little skill in the use of compasses, this figure is a symbol of mastery.

Freemasonry preserves a tradition of older esoteric schools when it says the compasses are "to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions in due bounds." That is, the compasses are the Masonic symbol for control of the fiery desire force which is represented by the circular form of the letter Samekh.

Can you take this hint? Skill in wielding the compasses is represented by the seven-pointed star. But this star is on the angel's breast to remind us that the requisite skill in managing the desire nature depends on the "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel." To gain this skill, we must receive instruction from the angel.

We put ourselves in a position to receive the angelic message when we devote ourselves to the work of making experimental verification of the fact that the real presence of the Higher Self may be perceived at the heart of our personal lives. Such single devotion brings us into harmony with the universal order which is exhibited in the laws which find manifestation in the cycles of the heavenly bodies.

The Great Work, which completes the expression of the laws of nature, is an artistic adaptation of those laws by man. Without man, this work cannot come to full fruition. "Nature unaided", says an ancient occult maxim, "always fails." Although all human action results from a series of transformations of the One Energy, it is only when that Energy is expressed through human thought, speech and works—intelligently directed—that fulfillment is possible. The Great Art of the occultist requires the agency of human persons.

As a verb, the Hebrew letter-name סמך, **Samekh**, means to prop, to bear up, to establish, hold or sustain. As a noun, it means a tent-peg which makes the tent firm in its place. Both as a verb and as a noun, its meanings are closely allied to the idea of **verification** which is the keynote of this lesson.

Most of the instruction you have been given thus far consists of theory. This is an essential part of your training because it is an old occult maxim that the pupil must be well-grounded in theory before he can begin to practice.

It is necessary for you to learn the terms, the alphabet in which your working instructions are written. Nevertheless, these theories must be **established** and supported. They must be **verified** before they can become part of your working equipment. They must be **tried**. Their temper must be **tested** to the utmost. **Application** is the touchstone whereby all our knowledge must be tested.

This point is precisely where the teaching you are now receiving, and will receive hereafter, differs from many systems of occult instruction. It is practical. You will be given precise directions as to how to test these theories, and as to how to put your knowledge into practice.

Already you have made a start if you have carried out faithfully the exercises given with these lessons. They are intended to have their principal effect in shaping your attitudes toward yourself and your brothers and sisters here on earth. A realization of the nature and true unity of all mankind is an **absolute essential** for the successful practice of magic in its truest, highest forms. These exercises are intended also to accustom you to linking up the various ideas depicted by the Tarot Keys, both with one another and with your experience of life.

In this connection, however, you must see one thing clearly. The foregoing does not mean that in order to practice the magical art you need nothing more than a recipe, or a set of directions which you may follow as mere routine. The magical art includes a **transformation of your personality**, and the raising or expansion of your consciousness until you perceive clearly the principles and Laws whereby you operate. The great trial and testing is a testing of yourself. Tarot represents **your** states of consciousness. The principles it depicts are those governing your life. They emanate from the **One Identity** which is your innermost **Self**.

The letter Samekh, consequently, represents the trial, the probation, the purgation and purification of your personality to the end that it may become a fit channel for the expression of the One Force, a fit Temple of the Most High, a pure and holy habitation for the One Spirit. Thus only does the Law of Verification bring about the establishment or the foundation of the House of God. As you progress with your studies and perform the work set for you to do, you are at the same time undergoing subtle tests which prove your fitness to carry on the Great Work to its completion.

See to it that you take this enterprise seriously. You have offered yourself as a candidate for Truth. Truth will be revealed to you when you have proved yourself ready for it. Your first test is the **earnestness** with which you apply yourself to the preliminary instruction.

This is the true purport of the following passage from THE BOOK OF TOKENS in the meditation on the letter Samekh:

> "Thus am I as one who testeth gold in a furnace,
> And this aspect of my being
> Presenteth to the unrighteous
> A face of wrath.
>
> Yet by this purgation of fire
> Do I uphold and sustain thee
> In every moment of thy life.

Behold, I am he who testeth
thee
With many subtle tests.
Wise art thou if thou knowest
That the subtle serpent of
temptation
Is in truth the Anointed One
Who bringeth thee to liberation."

Note that this quotation refers to **wrath** and to a **serpent**. Both these are closely related to the letter Samekh and to the underlying meaning of Key 14.

In Key 8 we see the serpent coiled, symbolized by the letter Teth (ט). In Key 11 we see, in the letter Lamed (ל), the serpent uncoiled and active, its head erect and its tail pointing downward and to the left. The letter Samekh (ס) shows the completion of the upward movement of the tail toward the mouth of the serpent, and it is therefore a reversal of the symbolism of Teth.

Teth shows the serpent power as it is before we have learned to direct it. Lamed shows it at the half-way stage toward mastery. Samekh shows the result of perfect control. The serpent biting its tail has been for ages a symbol of eternity and of wisdom. It suggests circular movement by its shape. This establishes a connection between Key 14 and Key 10 to which Jupiter is attributed.

This connection is verified by the fact that to the letter Samekh is assigned the sign Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter. Sagittarius means "archer", and its astrological symbol is an arrow. It is a sign of the fiery triplicity, Aries and Leo being the other two fiery signs. Sagittarius is said to be ruled by Jupiter because the fiery power it manifests is directed and controlled by means of the Law of Cyclicity or Rotation, pictured by Key 10.

This fiery activity is a form of intense vibration, and the Hebrew noun for "wrath" also means vibration. The serpent power is also the desire force behind all we do. It can be terribly destructive when not wisely directed, and wrath or anger is its commonest destructive emotional manifestation.

Yet it is the power which leads to freedom, the force which destroys limitations and impediments to free expression. It is really the tempering, cleansing power that gets rid of all impurity and error in our personal consciousness. To the objects of its disintegrating activity it is terrible, but the wise perceive its beneficence.

The number 14 represents the principle of reason (4), expressed through the agency of concentration (1). The verification of hypotheses arrived at by reasoning is carried out by

concentration. Concentration is the focusing of the vibratory activity of the serpent fire at a definite point in the brain. The means whereby concentration is accomplished is symbolized by the Magician directing power from above toward a plane below—his garden.

The digits of 14 add to 5, the number of the Hierophant. For the goal of verification is reached by following carefully the instruction imparted by the "still, small voice" of intuition. 5 is also the number of adaptation and desire, and proper adaptation of the tremendous forces of desire through intelligent direction, results in the attainment of the higher consciousness.

One clue to the inner meaning of all this may be found in the word דבח, **debakh**, "to sacrifice". This word is written with letters having numeral values which add to 14.

Nobody ever attains to perfection without sacrifice. To be sure, he who knows the value of his objective feels no sense of loss when he rids himself of every incumbrance which interferes with his progress. In early stages of the Great Work, one is often called upon to make decisions which appear to involve some kind of sacrifice. Experience demonstrates the falsity of such appearances by showing that every act of wise elimination makes possible the expression of a greater measure of power. At first, however, some of the tests are hard to meet.

They who fail in them are usually those who are readiest to assert that there is nothing in the promises of Ageless Wisdom. In one sense they are right. **There is less than nothing for the lazy, for the double-minded or for the fearful. Less than nothing for persons who lack courage to face periods of seeming failure.**

He who seeks the highest must have zeal. He must be in fiery rebellion against the limitations and bondage of ignorance. To carry on against odds which seem to be hopeless, he must be filled with intense, one-pointed desire to demonstrate by actual experience that he is really and truly what every one of these lessons has declared concerning the inmost nature of man.

Zeal, however, is not enough. Nor was any person ever liberated just because he had a flaming desire for freedom. The fiery force of the desire nature must be directed. To this, Key 14 refers by its title.

Temperance, here, is not restricted to the meaning now in common use, though it does include the idea of being able to manage one's appetites. The title of Key 14 is to be understood in its ancient signification: "the act of tempering, or mixture".

The object of tempering is to impart more strength to what is tempered. In the Great Work, this object is attained by proper mixture of opposite forces. That is, by applying the Law of Equilibration. This meaning is evident in Key 14.

Consider the symbolism carefully as you color the Key. By this time, Tarot should begin to speak to you even before you have read the detailed analysis of its symbolism. Remember, no analysis can exhaust the meanings. What is written in these pages is intended to put you on the track of correct interpretation; but in every Key, there is for you a special, personal message. In the age long development of your personality to its present stage of growth, you have accumulated a store of experience. This treasure is below the surface of your consciousness, but through the operation of psychological laws which have been utilized in the construction of Tarot, these Keys can evoke from subconscious depths just exactly what you need to know.

This week, test yourself in various ways. Test yourself with respect to your own earnest desire to succeed in this work, to grasp the meaning of Ageless Wisdom. Ask yourself such questions as these:

"Does my belief actually support me in the various crises of my daily experience? If not, what does? Who does what I do, thinks what I think, feels what I feel? Is my study and work transmuting the base metal of my personality into the gold of real attainment? Are my desires becoming purer, my mental processes clearer, my intuitions better defined?"

We cannot repeat too often that Ageless Wisdom is not a creed, not a system of belief, not an escape from reality into a mirage of glittering generalities. Nor is it a doctrine which puts aside until after death all hope of verifying its fundamentals. Plainly and specifically, it declares that its basic principles have been matters of human knowledge and experience in other days and may be tested in the same ways now.

Just as plainly and specifically it avers that such experience is not miraculous. It may be repeated as to its fundamentals by any person willing to undertake the necessary training of body and mind. It warns all who approach even the beginning of the Path of Attainment that this ancient Way is not for cowards, not for the lukewarm, not for triflers. To the courageous, the zealous, the persevering, it offers evidences that admit of no denial. It points out the way to attaining firsthand knowledge and shows how to follow that way to its goal.

At the same time it steadfastly refuses to communicate the higher aspects of this knowledge to persons who have not made ready their bodies and minds to receive such communication. It never attempts to transmit to those who are not duly and truly prepared any part of those inner mysteries which must always remain hidden by the veil of ignorance from such as are unready to look upon the face of truth.

COLORING INSTRUCTIONS

KEY 14. TEMPERANCE

Yellow:	Crown over mountain peaks, Yods over eagle, torch flame (interspersed with red, to show that it is fire), lion's eyes, path leading up to the mountains.
Brown:	Lion (see instructions for Key 10), eagle (except beak and legs), torch handle.
Blue:	Pool, and stream from vase.
Green:	Grass.
Orange:	Ornament on head of angel; vase.
Violet:	Mountains in background. Dilute the color so that the mountains will not be a violent purple.
Gold:	Background; star on angel's breast. (Use yellow to which a little orange has been added, if you do not choose to use gold.)
White:	Dress.
Blonde:	Angel's hair, beak, legs and talons of eagle.
Red:	Angel's wings. These are high-lighted with blue.

The rainbow is a succession of bands of color. Begin at the upper side of this arc with violet and apply, in succession, blue, green, yellow, orange and red.